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ABSTRACT

The Extended School Services (ESS) program was established in 1990 in Kentucky. The program extends the school day, week, or year for students at risk of academic failure. All Kentucky school districts receive funding for ESS implementation. This paper reports on a comprehensive evaluation of the ESS program during the 2001-02 school year. Evaluation instruments consisted of statewide surveys of district and school ESS coordinators, and onsite visits to a sample of 18 schools with ESS programs. The surveys focused on community, school, and ESS descriptions; selection and retention; consolidated plan; children's perceptions; relationship to regular school programs; role of parents; and staffing and evaluation. Based on the findings from the surveys, the ESS program was viewed positively by district and school coordinators in terms of helping to address the needs of students at risk academically. Also, the coordinators agreed that ESS funds should remain a separate categorical fund. Further, the coordinators stated that staffing issues, professional development, and transportation were the most needed improvements. Additional findings are included in the report. Appended are eight graphs to supplement the findings from the surveys. (WFA)

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# Kentucky District and School Coordinators' Perceptions of Their Extended School Services Programs

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The Extended School Services (ESS) program was established in 1990 as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). Designed specifically to address the needs of Kentucky's at-risk student population, ESS is designed to be an aggressive, proactive program that diminishes academic problems before they recur and become long term (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 2000b). The ESS program extends the school day, week, or year for students at risk of academic failure, providing them with additional instructional time to help them meet academic goals. Rather than serving as an "add-on" or "stand-alone" program, ESS is designed to be an integral part of each school's regular academic program, thus ensuring that students are provided with instructional assistance in curricular areas in which they are performing poorly.

All Kentucky school districts receive funding specifically earmarked for ESS implementation. According to publications from the Division of Extended Learning of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), nearly every school within those districts provides such services; thus, nearly 1,450 schools have some type of ESS program (AEL, 2001; Quality Education Data, 1998).

## Past Evaluations

To date, three major within-state (internal) evaluations of the ESS program have been completed (University of Kentucky, 1991; KDE, 1993; and Joint Center for the Study of Educational Policy at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, 1998). In 1999, the Kentucky Commissioner of Education called for an external evaluation, i.e., by an agency(ies) outside of Kentucky. This evaluation was to be piloted in the spring of 2000 and conducted during the 2000-01 academic year (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 2000b).

The KDE approved a plan submitted by Drs. Pamela Nesselrodt and Eugene Schaffer (of Dickinson College, Pennsylvania, and the University of Maryland, respectively), which focused on four major categories related to the ESS program: identification, referral, and assignment of services; profiles of students receiving services; profiles of ESS programs; and outcomes of the programs (Nesselrodt & Schaffer, 2000a). The evaluators recommended using a variety of data collection procedures, including written surveys of multiple groups, interviews with samples from those groups, written program descriptions, classroom and ESS session observations, analysis of standardized achievement test scores, and statistical analysis of outcomes data.

Nesselrodt and Schaffer completed a pilot test of the ESS program in the spring of 2000, which resulted in two reports—one on the design, testing, and refinement of instruments and another on the refinement and finalization of research questions and methodology. The pilot test yielded a data collection design, data collection procedures and instruments, and analysis procedures.

**Current Evaluation**

In the fall of 2001, KDE contracted with a partnership of AEL and Western Kentucky University (WKU) for a comprehensive evaluation of the ESS program during the 2001-02 school year. All learnings from the pilot test were incorporated into AEL's evaluation design. Fifteen evaluation questions were assembled into the major categories of (1) identification, referral, and assignment of services; (2) profiles of students receiving services; (3) profiles of ESS programs and their implementation patterns; (4) services to students placed at risk; and (5) outcomes of the program.

AEL's comprehensive evaluation of the ESS program consists of two major components—statewide surveys and on-site visits—to be completed by November 30, 2002. The surveys were administered to the district and school ESS coordinators in the fall of 2001.

The on-site visits replicated most of the procedures and data collection instruments utilized in the pilot test, with modifications as described. A pair of trained data collectors made scheduled four-day visits to a sample of 18 schools with ESS programs (18 visits during the fall/winter of 2001-02 and 6 of those schools re-visited in the summer of 2002) and collected both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of ESS stakeholder groups.* Such data collection involved classroom and ESS session observations; interviews with ESS teachers, ESS students, ESS parents, the school ESS coordinator, and the ESS district coordinator; surveys of non-ESS teachers, ESS teachers, ESS students, and ESS parents; a school and program description form; and written documentation such as the school's Consolidated Plan and Needs Assessment, as well as descriptions/policies of the ESS program. In addition, AEL added two new instruments—the Innovation Component Configuration Map, to generate patterns of implementation across ESS programs, and the *AEL Continuous School Improvement Questionnaire*, to measure the extent to which a school faculty is committed to continuous improvement.

The major purposes for the statewide surveys administered in the fall of 2001 were to provide preliminary information regarding ESS programs statewide and to provide corroborative evidence supporting the generalizability, reliability, and validity of the findings from the on-site visit component of the ESS evaluation (scheduled for completion in November 2002). This paper summarizes key findings from the administration of a questionnaire to district and school ESS coordinators across the state of Kentucky (see Cowley & Meehan, 2001, for the full report).

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*A two-stage sampling process was implemented to identify the 18 schools. KDE staff developed a six-step process to establish a pool of 48 schools, which included reviewing student achievement data, free/reduced lunch levels, overall academic student index, ethnicity, school-level indicators such as novice-level readers and dropout rates, comparisons of subsets of student scores within schools, and geographic and demographic representations. AEL completed the second stage by securing Johnson locale codes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001) and published enrollment figures (Quality Education Data, 1998) for each school in the pool. Using a combination of building level, geography, urbanicity, and enrollment, AEL staff selected the 18 schools for the fall/winter 2001-02 visits and then re-visited 6 of those 18 schools for the summer 2002 visits.

# METHODOLOGY

## Instrumentation

**District coordinator survey.** The Nesselrodt and Schaffer version of the district ESS coordinator questionnaire contained 24 items, 4 of which were open-ended, and focused on community, school, and ESS descriptions; selection and retention; consolidated plan; children's perceptions; relationship to regular school programs; role of parents; and staffing and evaluation. AEL revised the survey to convert it to a scannable format and included additional questions as suggested by KDE staff (regarding technology usage in ESS sessions and preferences for ESS fund disbursement). The survey was reviewed and approved by AEL's Institutional Review Board in August 2001. The final version consisted of 28 items on 11 x 17 paper, printed on both sides, and perforated and folded. Face and content validity of the Nesselrodt and Schaffer instrument were established in the pilot test.

**School coordinator survey.** The Nesselrodt and Schaffer version of the school ESS coordinator questionnaire contained 23 items, 4 of which were open-ended, and focused on the same areas as the district coordinator survey. AEL revised the survey to convert it to a scannable format and included additional questions and response options as suggested by KDE staff. The survey was reviewed and approved by AEL's Institutional Review Board in August 2001. The final version consisted of 3 demographic variables (role, building level, and urbanicity) and 26 items on 11 x 17 paper, printed on both sides, and perforated and folded. Face and content validity of the Nesselrodt and Schaffer instrument were established in the pilot test.

## Data Collection Procedures

The statewide school and district ESS coordinator surveys comprise the first major component of AEL's comprehensive evaluation of the ESS program. In August 2001, KDE provided AEL with population lists of ESS districts (N=179) and principals of schools with ESS programs (N=1,433). The 179 district survey kits were mailed on August 31 by AEL staff. By the cutoff date of November 5, 151 usable completed surveys were received, for a return rate of 84%. The 1,433 school survey kits were mailed during the first week of September. Seventeen of the school principals or ESS coordinators replied that their schools were not currently operating ESS programs, while one survey kit was returned due to an incorrect school address. By the cutoff date of November 5, 837 usable completed surveys were received, for a return rate of 59% of the revised population of 1,415 (1,433 minus the 18 noted here).

**Data Analysis Procedures**

District and school ESS coordinator surveys were scanned into databases and exported to SPSS for quantitative analyses (frequencies and percentages) of selected-response items. For qualitative analyses, staff coded and categorized responses to open-ended items. Graphics were generated as needed to clearly portray the findings from both surveys.

**Reliability**

To assess the degree of internal consistency, Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed for this administration of both the district and school coordinator surveys, using all selected-response items. While traditionally intended for interval (scaled) items, this procedure is used here in an exploratory manner to help quantify the psychometric properties of the instruments. This administration of the district coordinator survey resulted in a coefficient of .59; the school coordinator survey, a coefficient of .58. While these are lower than desired, when balanced with the need for face validity they do verify that the survey items, in general, relate to and contribute to the same construct.

## FINDINGS

### District Level

As noted earlier, 151 district ESS coordinators completed and returned their ESS surveys. The first question asked respondents to identify, from a provided list, all of the most common reasons why students received ESS services. Nearly all respondents (95%) noted such services were provided when students were in danger of failing a course or to improve students' academic achievement. Nearly half (48%) indicated the purpose was to extend learning time, while 44% said it was for students in danger of dropping out of school, 39% indicated it sustained performance, and 23% said it improved self-esteem. Of the 6% who selected the "other" response, 25% of their comments were related to homework and the remainder were idiosyncratic.

Respondents were then asked to identify from a list of options how the district's students were selected for ESS. All of the district coordinators indicated that teacher recommendations were used, and two thirds indicated that parents requested such services. Nearly half (45%) indicated that students also requested ESS services and 33% used standardized test scores. Of the 7% who selected the "other" response, 47% said students were selected using test/grade information, 20% by standardized test scores, and 33% by some other criterion.

When asked to indicate all the subjects being taught in ESS classrooms, nearly all respondents selected math (100%), reading (99%), English (94%), science (93%), and social studies (84%). Of the 26% who selected the "other" option, about a fourth each indicated arts and humanities (27%) or writing (25%). Approximately 10% each mentioned life skills or practical living skills (11%), foreign language (11%), or study skills (9%); the remaining 18% offered a variety of idiosyncratic subjects.

Responses were mixed when district coordinators were asked to identify the ways in which technology is used in ESS classrooms. About three fourths selected drill and practice/academic games (82%) and research tools (74%), followed by two thirds selecting curriculum (64%). Other responses included instructional simulations (38%), communication tools (36%), productivity tools (35%), classroom management (20%), and other (3%).

When asked if they had received staff development related to ESS, 68% of the respondents responded affirmatively. Nearly all of those respondents (85%) felt the training they had received was adequate. When asked if school-level coordinators in their district had received staff development related to ESS, two thirds (66%) responded affirmatively. Of those 66%, 88% believed the staff development the school coordinators received was adequate.

Respondents were then asked whether ESS teachers and non-ESS teachers in their district had received staff development related to ESS. Half (50%) believed that ESS teachers had received staff development, 82% of whom thought the training was adequate. Only 24% believed that non-

ESS teachers had received staff development related to ESS, of whom 88% believed that the staff development had been adequate.

In Question 13, respondents were asked to select a single response regarding how often ESS and regular classroom teachers consulted on the design of instruction and/or goals. However, based on respondent feedback, it was decided to analyze this question as a multiple-response item, given that many district coordinators indicated that their responses varied for individual schools within their district and selected more than one response. Nearly two thirds (64%) indicated that such consultation took place on an as-needed basis, with 47% indicating that regular classroom teachers are also teaching their students in ESS.

Similarly, in Question 14, respondents were asked to indicate how often the ESS and regular classroom teachers consulted on student performance. Again, based on respondent feedback, it was decided to analyze this question as a multiple-response option. Slightly more than half (51%) reported such consultation took place at least once a month, 25% said at least once a week, and 23% said the question was not applicable, since the regular teacher was the ESS teacher.

District coordinators were then asked how often ESS teachers and parents consulted on student goals and student performance. More than two thirds (70%) responded that consultation on student goals took place as needed throughout the school year, 15% reported regular consultation throughout the school year, 10% reported no consultation, and 5% said only prior to the start of school. For consultation on student performance, about equal numbers reported consultation at report card time (45%) and at least monthly (42%), 11% reported no consultation, and 1% reported at least weekly consultation between ESS teachers and parents.

The next two questions dealt with consultation between ESS teachers and students on student goals and student performance. More than half (60%) reported consultation on student goals as needed throughout the school year, 35% said regular consultation throughout the school year, 3% said not at all, and 2% said only prior to the start of school. For consultation on student performance, nearly half (48%) reported at least weekly, 32% said at least monthly, 18% said only at report card time, and 2% said not at all.

When asked what were the most important ESS outcomes for the students, 99% of the district coordinators indicated enhanced academic achievement. Almost two thirds (62%) selected increased motivation, nearly half (48%) selected increased self-esteem, and more than a third (38%) selected improved attendance. Of the 6% who selected the "other" response, 33% each said completion of work assignments or passing grades.

In Question 20, respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of options, all of the forces that helped ESS to succeed in their district. Nearly three fourths (74%) indicated a clear support or mandate from their district or other political actions. Nearly two thirds (62%) selected excellent relationships among staff. About half selected either clear support from parents or community (50%) or outstanding principal/coordinator administration (49%). More than a third (37%) selected

financial support and 16% selected excellent staff development. Of the 11% who selected the "other" response, 33% noted staff commitment and willingness, 22% noted district or school coordinator, 17% noted excellent/experienced teachers, and 11% each noted consolidated plans and transportation provided to students.

When asked what problems or obstacles had been encountered in implementing ESS in their districts, respondents selected all of the response options to varying extents. Nearly half (45%) noted student transportation, 24% noted inadequate financial support, 20% noted inadequate preparation of teachers or other support staff, 17% said regulation problems, and 16% said student demands. Staff relationships received 8%, district or parent demands respectively received 7% and 6%, and teacher union problems received only 1%. Of the 28% who selected the "other" response, nearly a third (32%) noted lack of teachers or that teachers were not interested, 20% noted lack of student motivation or participation, and 18% mentioned timing conflicts.

When asked to describe the overall effectiveness of ESS in their districts, 70% selected good, 17% excellent, 12% fair, and only 1% selected poor. District coordinators were then asked whether providing funds through the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) formula or continuing funding through separate categorical funds would be better for students and schools. In response, 88% indicated a preference for continuing separate categorical funding to districts. When asked to explain their preference regarding funding (Question 24), 40% of the 132 who provided comments noted that earmarked funds are best, 14% said that the categorical disbursement is more efficient and effective, and 14% said that SEEK funding would provide more funds or more flexibility.

When asked to identify the major strengths of ESS in their districts (Question 25), nearly all respondents provided numerous strengths, for a total of 276 comments. Five main topics were noted: the ESS program (31%), students (21%), teachers (20%), staff (17%), and other (10%). Specific comments related to the ESS program included flexibility, focus on individual student needs, improved student performance, low teacher/student ratio, number of students reached, innovative and creative design of the program, focus on core content areas, and evaluation of student progress. Specific student-related comments included providing students with the extra time and/or help they needed, students' desire to attend the program and increase their achievement, transportation, helping students avoid failing or helping them catch up, increased levels of self-confidence and self-esteem of participating students, and helping students keep up with classmates. Specific teacher-related comments included the commitment/dedication and desire of teachers to help students, the communication between ESS and regular teachers, the willingness of teachers to participate in the ESS program, and the experience and qualifications of the ESS teachers. Specific staff-related comments included the support, knowledge, and organization of staff members in general; building-level support and leadership; and district support and cooperation. Other comments focused on the parental cooperation and support for the ESS program, and the communication among teachers, students, and parents.

District coordinators were then asked to identify the biggest challenges faced by ESS in their districts (Question 26). Again, nearly all respondents noted challenges for a total of 207 comments. Nearly a fourth of the comments (23%) noted difficulties with student transportation; 18% mentioned difficulties in getting an adequate number of ESS teachers or the need for a lower teacher/student ratio; 12% noted lack of student interest or motivation for ESS participation; and 11% mentioned inadequate funding.

When asked to suggest recommendations for improvements to their ESS programs (Question 27), the majority of coordinators responded, some with multiple suggestions, for a total of 152 comments. Almost a third of the comments (29%) were idiosyncratic in nature. Seventeen percent suggested more funding or increased salaries, 12% recommended expanding and serving more students, 11% suggested offering ESS services during the regular school day, and 9% requested additional professional development.

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to add other ESS-related comments (Question 28). About half of the district coordinators replied to this item, with two providing multiple responses, for a total of 83 comments. More than half (60%) provided some type of endorsement of the program or its components or outcomes, such as helped meet goals, a wonderful opportunity, a tremendous impact, etc. One respondent noted, "The ESS program is one of the most positive arms of education reform in KY." Sixteen percent provided comments requesting funding and/or regulation changes and 8% recognized improvements that could be made locally.

**School Level**

As noted earlier, 837 of the school ESS coordinators completed and returned their ESS surveys. When asked to indicate their role, 39% selected ESS coordinator, 30% selected ESS coordinator and teacher, 14% each selected either principal or ESS coordinator and principal, and the remainder selected classroom teacher or other role.

Of the school ESS coordinators, 59% indicated they worked in an elementary school, followed by 19% at high school, 18% at middle school, and 4% at some other building level. Sixty-nine percent indicated their school was rural, 19% suburban, and 12% urban.

The first question asked respondents to identify, from a provided list, all of the most common reasons why students received ESS services. Nearly all respondents (92%) noted such services were provided to improve students' academic achievement. More than three fourths (76%) indicated the purpose was to assist students either in danger of failing or of dropping out, nearly half (46%) indicated it was to extend learning time, about a third said to sustain performance (39%) and to improve self-esteem (32%). Of the 8% who selected the "other" response, 21% made idiosyncratic comments, 19% said making up credit or work, 13% said homework help, and 12% said enrichment.

Respondents were then asked to identify, from a list of options, the ways in which most of the school's students were selected for ESS. Nearly all (97%) of the school coordinators indicated

that teacher recommendations were used, and two thirds (66%) indicated that parents requested such services. About a third (34%) each said students requested ESS services and that standardized test scores were used for selecting students. Of the 8% who selected the "other" response, 28% mentioned grades/assessments, 21% mentioned standardized tests, and 10% mentioned counselors.

When asked to indicate all the subjects being taught in ESS classrooms, nearly all respondents selected math (95%) and reading (86%). About two thirds selected English (67%) and science (61%); about half (56%) selected social studies. For the 36% who selected the "other" option, more than a third (36%) said writing, followed by arts/humanities (10%), study skills (7%), computer applications (7%), foreign languages (6%), and a variety of other miscellaneous subjects.

Responses were mixed when school coordinators were asked to identify the ways in which technology is used in ESS classrooms. About three fourths selected drill and practice/academic games (74%). Approximately half selected research tools (58%) and curriculum (46%). About a fourth selected instructional simulations (32%), communication tools (27%), productivity tools (26%), or classroom management (17%). For the 8% who selected the "other" option, 22% mentioned portfolios, 19% mentioned the Accelerated Reader program, 12% mentioned word processing, 11% mentioned various web sites, and 8% mentioned testing/assessment; the remaining comments were miscellaneous in nature.

When asked if they had received staff development related to ESS, 57% of the school coordinators responded affirmatively. Nearly all of those respondents (94%) felt the training was adequate. Coordinators were then asked whether ESS teachers and non-ESS teachers in their schools had received staff development related to ESS. Nearly half (41%) believed that ESS teachers had received staff development, 94% of whom thought the training was adequate. Only 18% believed that non-ESS teachers had received staff development related to ESS, of whom 94% believed that the staff development had been adequate.

School coordinators were then asked how often ESS and regular classroom teachers consulted on the design of instruction and/or goals. Nearly half (42%) reported such consultation took place as needed throughout the school year. Approximately a fourth indicated regular classroom teachers teach their students in ESS (29%) or regularly throughout the school year (24%). When asked how often they consulted on student performance, about a third each of the respondents said at least once a month (32%); N/A, indicating that the regular teacher was the ESS teacher (29%); or at least once a week (26%).

Respondents were then asked how often ESS teachers and parents consulted on student goals and student performance. More than two thirds (68%) responded that consultation on student goals took place as needed throughout the school year, 18% reported regular consultation throughout the school year, and 10% reported no consultation. For consultation on student performance, about equal numbers reported consultation at report card time (40%) and at least monthly (39%), while 12% reported no consultation between ESS teachers and parents.

The next two questions dealt with consultation between ESS teachers and students on student goals and student performance. About half reported consultation on student goals as needed throughout the school year (51%) and regularly throughout the school year (43%). For consultation on student performance, more than half (55%) reported at least weekly, 31% said at least monthly, and 11% said only at report card time.

When asked what were the most important ESS outcomes for the students, 98% indicated enhanced academic achievement. More than two thirds (70%) selected increased motivation and more than half (56%) selected increased self-esteem. About a third (30%) selected improved attendance. Of the 6% who selected the "other" response, 15% mentioned improving grades or academic performance, 13% mentioned earning credits, 12% mentioned graduation or promotion, 7% mentioned improving test skills or test scores, and 7% mentioned completing assignments or homework; the remaining comments were miscellaneous.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of options, all of the forces that helped ESS to succeed in their school. Nearly three fourths (73%) selected excellent relationships among staff, followed by a clear support or mandate from the district or other political actions (59%). About half selected clear support from parents or community (50%) and outstanding principal/coordinator administration (46%). About a third (39%) selected financial support and 18% selected excellent staff development. Of the 9% who selected the "other" response, 40% mentioned teachers or staff, 12% each noted transportation and students' interest, and the remaining comments were miscellaneous.

When asked what problems or obstacles had been encountered in implementing ESS in their schools, respondents selected all of the response options to a varying extent. Nearly half (46%) noted student transportation, 35% noted inadequate financial support, and 20% noted opposition or demands from students. Fifteen percent or less selected inadequate teacher preparation (15%), parent demands (11%), regulation problems (10%), district demands (8%), staff relationships (4%), and teacher union problems (1%). Of the 26% who selected the "other" response, 23% mentioned an inadequate number of teachers, 16% mentioned students' lack of interest, 13% mentioned scheduling conflicts between the ESS sessions and other activities, 11% mentioned lack of parent support, and 8% mentioned lack of time by both students and teachers; the remaining comments were miscellaneous in nature.

When asked to describe the overall effectiveness of ESS in their school, nearly two thirds (60%) described it as good, 28% said excellent, 11% said fair, and only 1% described the ESS effectiveness as poor. School coordinators were then asked whether providing funds through the SEEK formula or continuing funding through separate categorical funds would be better for students and schools. In response, 88% indicated a preference for continuing separate categorical funding. When asked to explain their preference, 689 responded, with 77% providing comments in favor of categorical funding, such as more accountable or trackable, current system is working well, keeps funds from being diverted to other programs, retains funds for the ESS program, and best meets the needs of students. Twelve percent were in favor of using the SEEK formula, noting that it would

result in more money in general for ESS or specifically for instructional materials, site-based councils would better disperse SEEK funds, and would allow the hiring of more teachers.

When asked to identify the major strengths of ESS in their schools (Question 23), nearly all respondents provided numerous strengths, for a total of 1,410 comments. Five main topics were noted: the ESS program (33%), teachers (31%), students (18%), staff (9%), and other (7%). Specific comments related to the ESS program included adherence to the program design, focus on core content areas, focus on individual student needs, improved student performance, low teacher/student ratio, and flexibility. Specific teacher-related comments included the commitment/dedication and desire of teachers to help students, experience and qualifications of the ESS teachers, quality of instruction, communication and relationships between ESS and regular teachers, collaboration and cooperation to provide services, and willingness of teachers to teach ESS. Specific student-related comments included their desire to participate in the program and increase their academic achievement, one-on-one time with teachers, helping students keep up with their classmates, increased self-confidence and self-esteem, helping students avoid failing, and giving students the extra time and/or help needed. Specific staff-related comments included their support and organization, building-level support and leadership, district-level support and cooperation, staff excellence, and commitment to identifying students.

Coordinators were then asked to identify the biggest challenges faced by ESS in their schools (Question 24). Again, nearly all respondents provided multiple challenges, for a total of 1,099 comments. Lack of student interest, motivation, or participation made up 19% of the comments; transportation, 16%; miscellaneous idiosyncratic comments, 16%; inadequate funding/materials, 15%; inadequate number of teachers, 13%; lack of time, 8%; lack of parental involvement or support, 7%; program design/components, 5%; and referral system and student identification, 4%.

When asked to suggest recommendations for improvements to their ESS programs (Question 25), the majority of coordinators responded, some with multiple suggestions, for a total of 776 comments. Almost a third of the comments (29%) focused on additional funds and/or salary increases; miscellaneous responses, 23%; additional professional development, 9%; program/instruction changes, 8%; guideline/policy changes, 8%; additional transportation, 8%; expanding/broadening services, 5%; changing the session days, 4%; hiring additional teachers, 3%; and improving communications, 3%.

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to add other ESS-related comments (Question 26). Less than half of the school coordinators responded, some with multiple responses, for a total of 416 comments. Nearly two thirds (65%) were endorsements of the program or its components or outcomes. The majority of these were program related, but some were student-focused and others were teacher/staff-focused. Other comments included recognition of improvements that could be made locally (13%), and a request for a funding or regulation change (11%).

## CONCLUSIONS/DISCUSSION

Given the findings presented in the previous section, the following conclusions are made about Kentucky's Extended School Services (ESS) program based on the perceptions of district and school ESS coordinators. However, the reader should keep in mind that the statewide surveys comprise just one component of the comprehensive evaluation; therefore, the survey results should not be interpreted solely in isolation from the second component, which is the on-site school visits.

- Responses about why students receive ESS services are consistent. Both groups of coordinators agree that the main reasons are to help students in danger of failing and to improve students' academic achievement. Student referrals to ESS come most often from their teachers, followed by parental requests.

- Meetings regarding instructional design and/or goals and consultation on student performance are reported to occur informally rather than on a regular basis, which may delay student progress. For example, ESS teachers and regular teachers, parents, or students most often meet on an as-needed basis regarding instructional design. For consultations on student performance, ESS teachers and regular teachers usually consult monthly, ESS teachers and parents usually meet when report cards come out, and ESS teachers and students usually meet on a weekly basis.

- The two coordinator groups agree that the most important outcomes for ESS students are enhanced student achievement and increased motivation. Both groups indicate that district support and excellent staff relationships are key forces that lead to success of the ESS program, with more district coordinators favoring district support and more school coordinators favoring staff relationships.

- The two coordinator groups agree that ESS funds should remain as a separate categorical fund and not become part of the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) formula, with coordinators most often stating that the current system works well and is more effective and efficient. Favorable responses for including ESS funds in the SEEK formula seem to be a function of coordinators' expectations that their districts or schools would receive additional money.

- Both coordinator groups agree that staffing issues, professional development, and transportation are the most needed improvements. Many of the district and school coordinators cited various types of problems with recruiting, hiring, and retaining teachers for their ESS sessions. Specifically mentioned were inadequate numbers of ESS teachers, low ESS teacher salaries, limited time for ESS planning and/or teaching, and recruiting the "best" teachers for ESS. Professional development for ESS coordinators and teachers was not universally available and was provided in varying degrees to the two groups of coordinators, according to survey responses.

Further, some coordinators suggested using ESS funds for whole-school professional development sessions, such as enrichment, while others mentioned the usefulness of the ESS summer conferences, which were recently discontinued. Student transportation to and from ESS sessions was described as a strength of many ESS programs, yet was noted also as a major problem by many of the district and school coordinators. Specifically mentioned as challenges were bus expenses, bus driver salaries, bus scheduling, and maintenance.

- District and school coordinators believe the benefits of the ESS program outweigh the difficulties, given that both groups cited far more strengths than problems. Further, both groups are overwhelmingly positive in their ratings of the overall effectiveness of the ESS program.

- District and school coordinators have good understandings of their respective ESS programs, given the close alignment of responses between the selected- and constructed-response items and between the two separate groups. For example, staff relationships and collaboration, building-level support and administration, and district-level support all were either selected often or mentioned frequently as a strength or helpful force. Similarly, inadequate finances and student transportation were either selected often or mentioned frequently as a problem or challenge to overcome.

- Responses to open-ended questions asked of the nearly 1,000 school and district coordinators confirm there are many successful programs operating in many schools in Kentucky. Further, many responses provided explanations of why particular ESS programs were successful. Numerous innovative and creative ESS methods were described briefly by both district and school coordinators.

- Both coordinator groups agree that the major strengths of ESS are the program, students, teachers, and staff. Specific strengths mentioned relating to the program were flexibility, focus on individual student needs, improved student performance, low teacher/student ratio, number of students served, innovative and creative design of the program, focus on core content, and evaluation of student progress. Teacher-related comments included commitment/dedication and desire to help students, experience and qualifications of ESS teachers, quality of instruction, communication and relationships between ESS and regular teachers, collaboration and cooperation to provide services, and willingness to teach ESS.

- In summary, it can be concluded that the ESS program is viewed positively by the district and school coordinators in terms of helping to address the needs of students who are at risk academically. Further, there is agreement among coordinators regarding funding preferences for, strengths of, challenges to, and improvements needed for their respective ESS programs.

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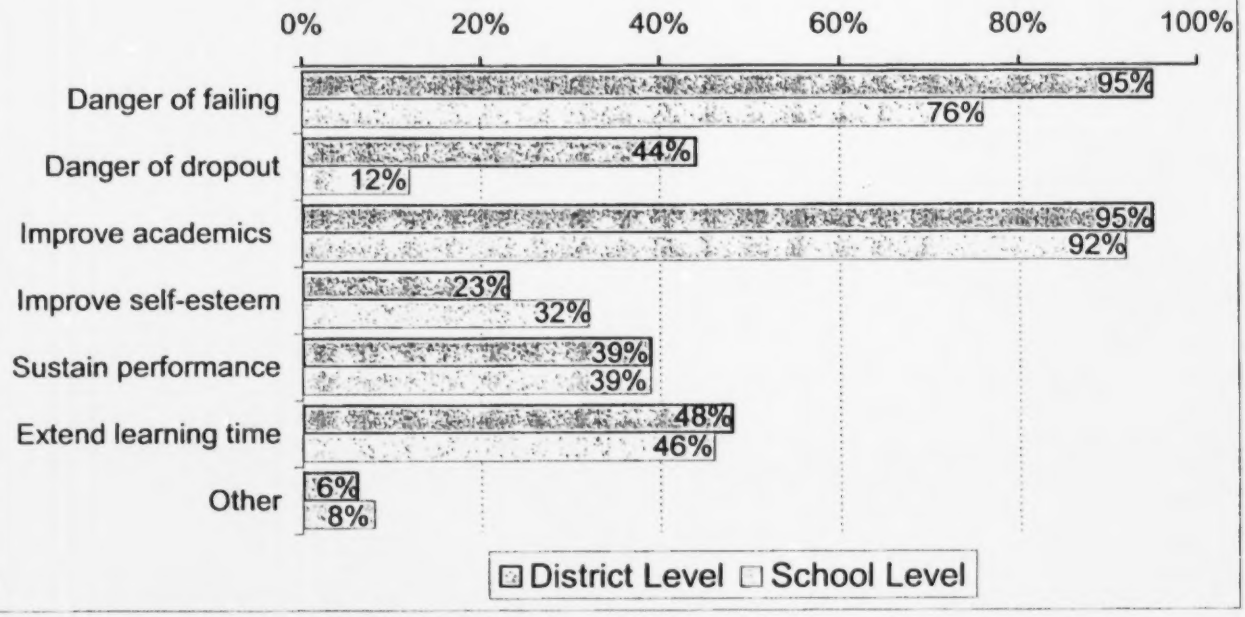
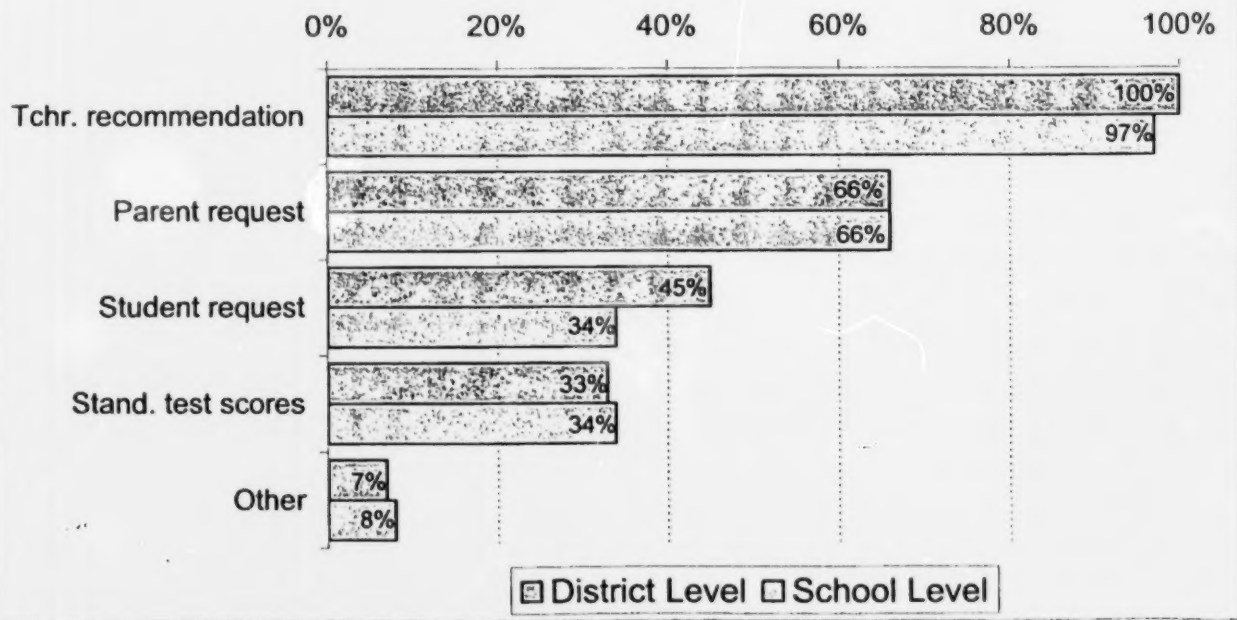
## APPENDIX:

Graphic Illustrations of District and School Coordinators' Responses

## What are the most common reasons that students receive ESS?




## How are most of the district's students selected for ESS?



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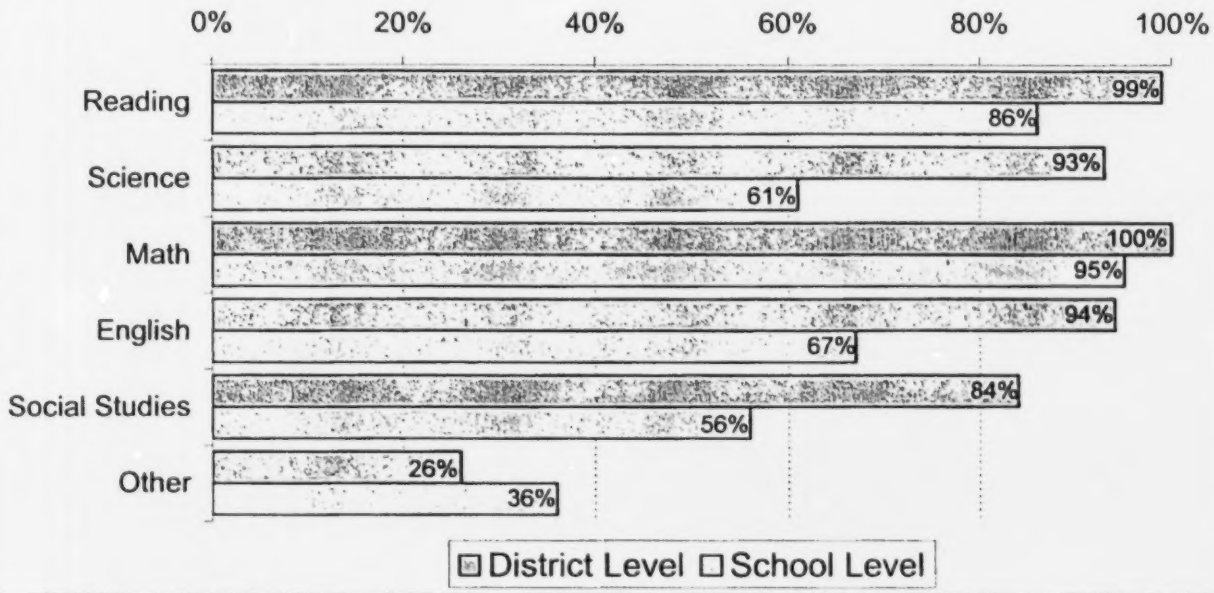
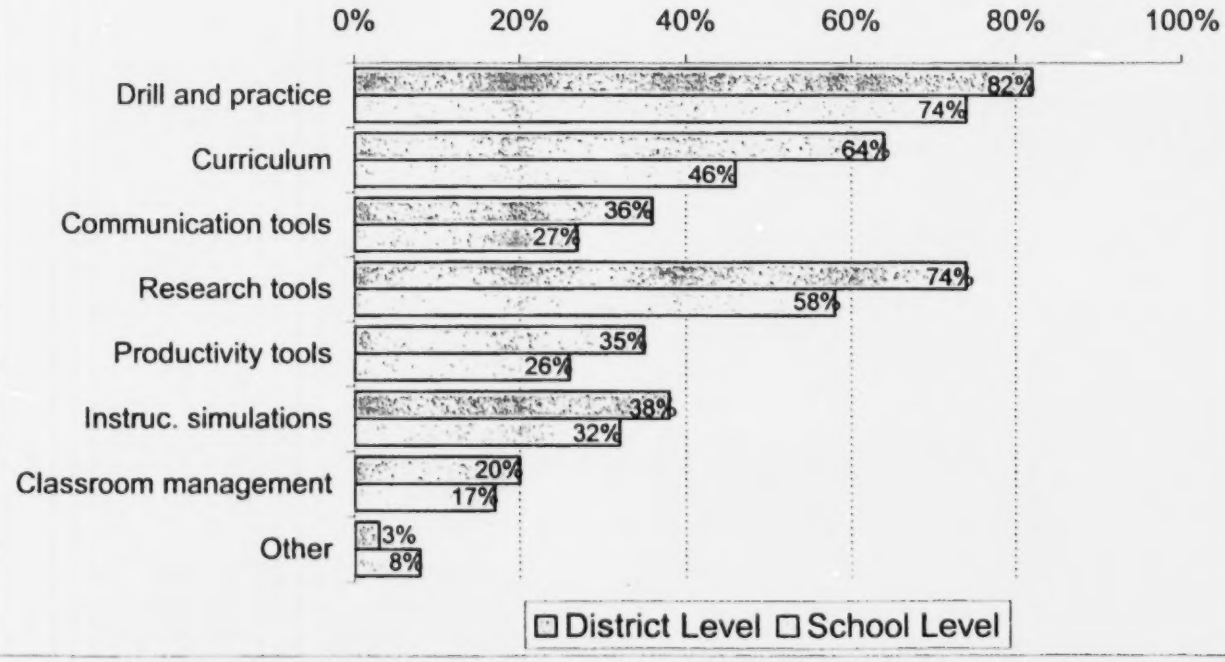
## What subjects are being taught in the ESS program?




## How is technology used in ESS classrooms?

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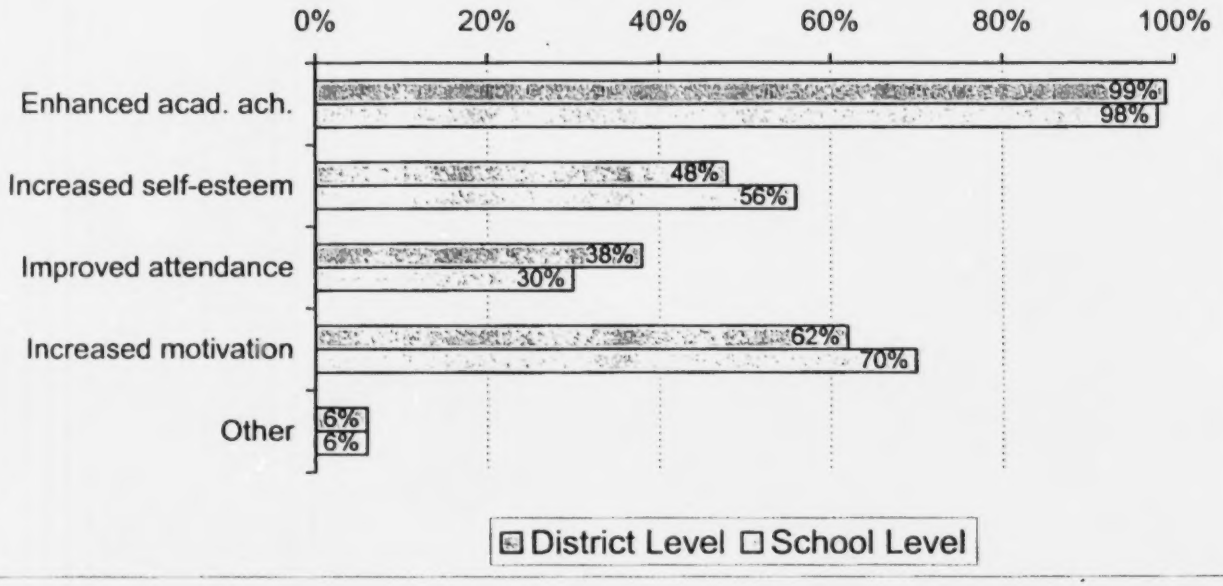
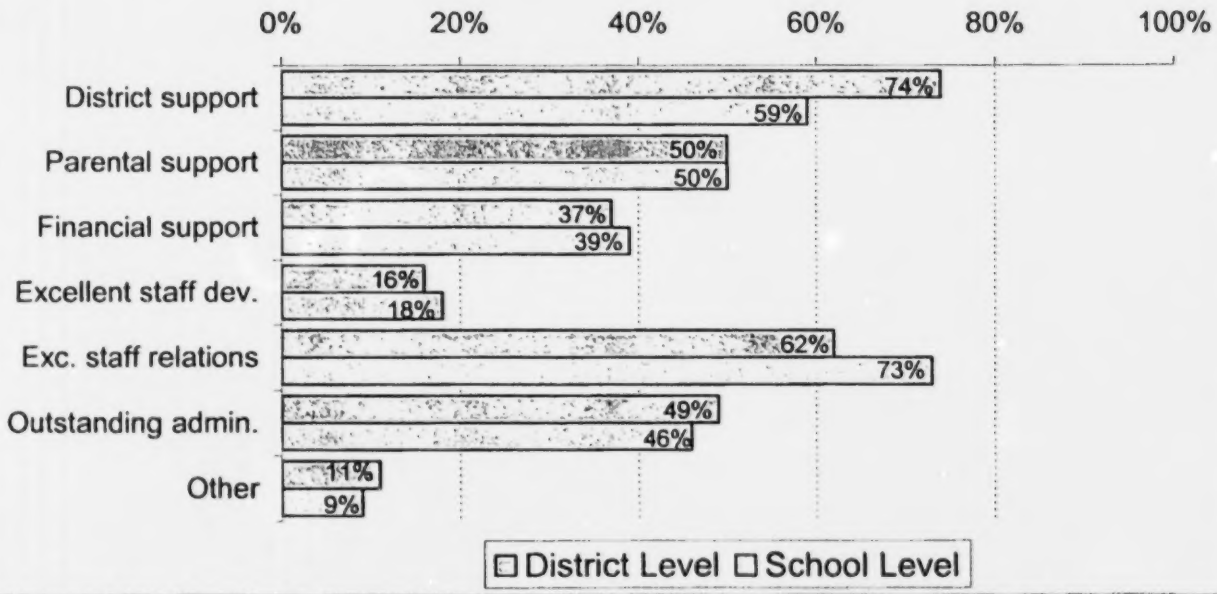
## What are the most important ESS outcomes for the student?




## What forces have helped ESS to succeed in your district?

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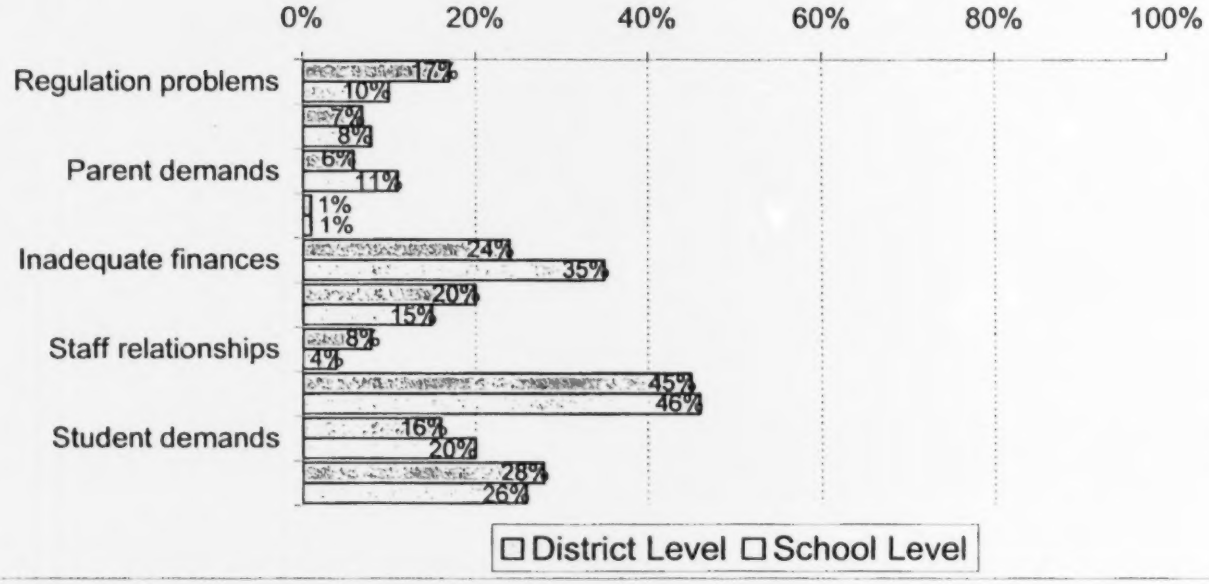
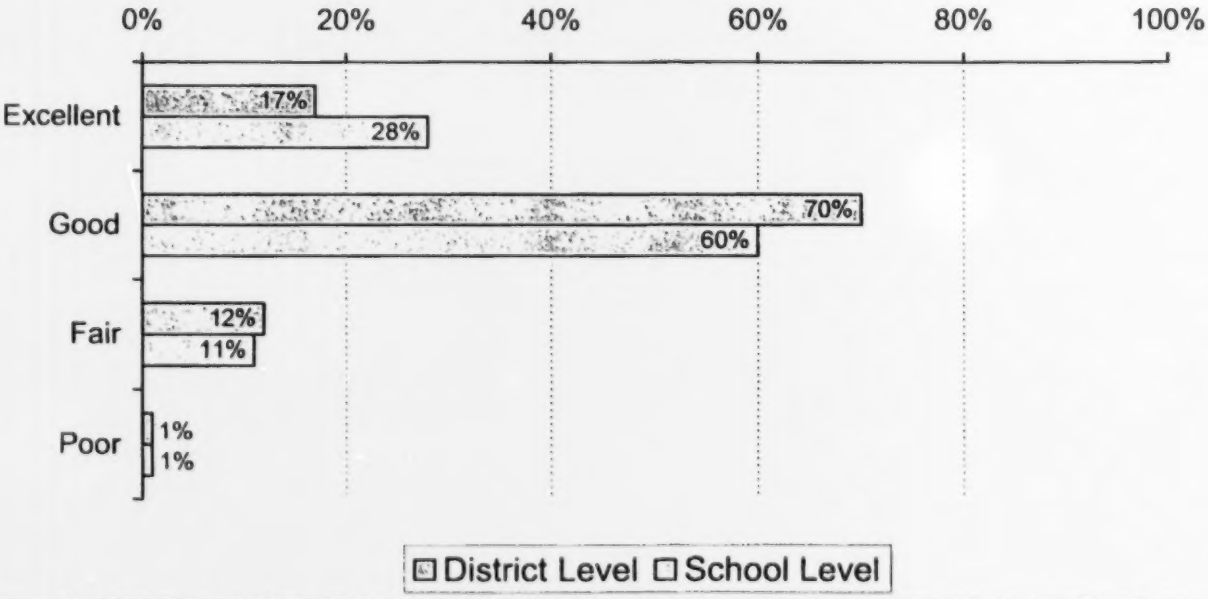
## What problems or obstacles have been encountered in implementing ESS in your district?




## Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of ESS?



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